

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OC-06 CCO-00 EB-07 /022 W

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R 301526Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9537

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABIDJAN 7114

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ACOM

SUBJ: WATTS RELAY STATION - FAREWELL DISCUSSION WITH  
FOREIGN MINISTER USHER

REF: (A) STATE 186970 (B) ABIDJAN 5745 (C) ABIDJAN 3394

1. I TOOK OCCASION OF FAREWELL CALL ON MINISTER OF  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS ARSENE USHER ASSOUAN (SEPTTEL) TO RAISE  
STATUS OF GOIC CONSIDERATION OF WATTS RELAY STATION.  
I TOLD HIM THAT DURING COURSE OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY  
SCHAUFLE'S RECENT VISIT, HE HAD RAISED MATTER WITH  
PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY, BUT THAT THE PRESIDENT KNEW NOTHING  
ABOUT IT.

2. USHER SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS  
WITHIN GOIC AND THAT THEREFORE MATTER HAD BEEN REFERRED  
TO COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. COUNCIL HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO  
MEET ON THE QUESTION, HOWEVER, DUE TO EXTENDED ABSENCE  
FROM COUNTRY OF MINISTER OF POST, TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH.  
NOW THAT THE MINISTER WAS BACK IN THE COUNTRY, ISSUE  
MIGHT SOON BE BROUGHT UP IN COUNCIL. USHER DID NOT  
KNOW PTT'S VIEWS.

3. I SAID THAT IF IT TURNED OUT THAT THERE WERE TECHNICAL  
ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE PROPOSAL, I HOPED THAT, BEFORE THE COUN-  
CIL TOOK A NEGATIVE DECISION, IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE  
FOR U.S. TECHNICIANS TO COME TO ABIDJAN TO DISCUSS WATTS  
WITH THE MINISTER OF PTT.

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4. USHER SAID HE VERY MUCH APPRECIATED THIS SUGGESTION.

HE WOULD FOLLOW THE DEBATE IN THE COUNCIL CAREFULLY AND, IF IT APPEARED THAT DISCUSSIONS WERE TENDING TOWARD A NEGATIVE CONCLUSION, HE WOULD SUGGEST THAT TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS WITH AMERICANS TAKE PLACE FIRST.

5. I THANKED HIM FOR HIS INTEREST IN THE MATTER.

6. COMMENT: IT WOULD APPEAR FROM THIS CONVERSATION THAT THERE IS NOT ANY POLITICAL OBJECTION TO A WATTS RELAY STATION IN IVORY COAST, BUT THAT THERE MAY BE TECHNICAL OBJECTIONS. DEPARTMENT SHOULD BE READY TO SEND QUALIFIED TEAM OF SPECIALISTS HERE TO DISCUSS DETAILS WITH PTT IF THAT IS THE OUTCOME OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS' DISCUSSIONS. I SHALL INSTRUCT THIS MISSION TO BE ON THE ALERT FOR GOIC RESPONSE AND TO FOLLOW UP PROMPTLY. END COMMENT.  
SMITH

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